

“Managing Diversity in Cities: towards intercultural urban policies” Presented by the “Intercultural Cities” programme (ICC), joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Commission

There is a genuine need for making migrant and minority integration more effective by bridging cultural divides, creating common cultural capital and injecting cultural competence in policies and institutions of diverse societies. This need is nowhere more strongly felt than in cities where long-standing residents share – or compete for - space, resources and opportunities with successive waves of newcomers with other ethnic, religious and linguistic backgrounds.

The cultural dimension of integrating diverse communities has been insufficiently explored and most cities lack the awareness, experience and know-how to engage effectively with this agenda. The Intercultural Cities (ICC) joint programme of the Council of Europe and the European Commission was launched in 2008 as a pilot to develop the concept and practice of intercultural integration. After the successful conclusion of the pilot, a new phase of Intercultural cities as process of capacity building scheme for cities will begin in 2011

- Can you give an example of something you recently saw or heard in your city which told you that intercultural dialogue is in a healthy state?
- Can you give an example of something in your city which suggests that there is still work to be done on improving intercultural dialogue?
- National and supra-national institutions have so far dominated the discussion around intercultural dialogue. Can you suggest why and how the discussion could be improved if the voices of cities were given more prominence?
- What has your city done, by means of formal legislation or the creation of institutions, to strengthen the prominence and legitimacy of intercultural dialogue? And what plans do you have to go even further in the future?
- Can you describe some more informal or creative ways in which you have been able to overcome ignorance or suspicion between groups and to build mutual understanding and co-operation?
- Intercultural dialogue is not something you can force people to engage in against their will, and crude attempts to bring people together through social engineering may well backfire. Can you suggest some more subtle ways to persuade citizens that it would suit their interests more to engage in dialogue and mixing, than to engage in avoidance and enmity?
- What has your city done to encourage that the voices of women and young people are given prominence in intercultural dialogue?